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EDITORIAL

CHRISTIAN preaching began on the very birth-day of the Church, the morning of that feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles and their companions in the upper room. When they came out into the streets of Jerusalem St Peter and the eleven stood, and like men filled with new wine proclaimed the good news of salvation in Jesus of Nazareth to the people. So immediate and so forcible was the impact of that proclamation upon the assembled crowds that their hearts were filled with compunction, and three thousand of them, acting on St Peter's injunction, did penance for their sins, were baptized and added to the number of the faithful that very day.¹

Ever since that time the ideal of the Church has been a preaching that proclaims salvation and converts. The Acts of the Apostles is full of sermons; St Stephen's sermon, St Peter's sermons and St Paul's, nor must we forget that the rest of the New Testament is sermon matter too; the reduction to inspired writing of the current oral proclamation of the Word of salvation. The gospels, once looked upon as biographies of our Lord or chronological accounts of his doings and teachings, have now come to be recognized by scholars (and this at least lies to the credit of *form criticism*) as traditional matter arranged and developed with the express object of proclaiming the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, the message of salvation, in such a way as to convert the heart, filling it with compunction for sin, and the urgent desire to be saved from sin's power.

The preaching found in the pages of the New Testament originates from within the Church and is conditioned by its authority. *They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers.*² Following the example of their Master we see the Apostles preaching in the Temple court, the place of sacrifice, and in the synagogue, the place of worship through and instruction in the Scriptures. Very soon this was to be replaced by preaching in the Christian assembly, where the eternal sacrifice of the Body broken and the

¹ Acts 2, 41.

² Acts 2, 42.

Blood poured out was offered by the New Israel, the People of God, in the Breaking of Bread. We have, perhaps, an intimation of the beginnings of this change in the account of St Paul's long preaching at the Sunday assembly of Troas when the young man Eutychus went to sleep and fell from the third loft of the upper chamber and was taken up dead.³

The primitive preaching of the early days was profoundly Scriptural, as we realize in reading the sermons in the Acts. It laid great emphasis upon God's dealings with his People, upon the mighty acts recorded in their Sacred History by which he had constantly preserved them, delivering them from their enemies and from the results of their own disobedience. This recital of the evidence of God's merciful power reached its climax in the proclamation of the good news of the final and eternal deliverance wrought by Jesus the Messias through his life, death and resurrection, of which all these earlier acts of God on their behalf were the type and the foreshadowing.

In process of time the Liturgy took shape. Its centre was from the beginning the Breaking of Bread as the Lord had broken it on the night before he suffered. This was to be the perpetual showing forth of his death till he should come again. It consisted, as it does today, of the offering of the gifts of the people, and of the solemn consecration of those gifts that they might become the sacrificial and sacrificed Body and Blood, to be distributed as spiritual food in Holy Communion; a feast upon a sacrifice. But around this central core was built up in course of time selections from the scriptural and historical record of God's dealing with his People, the record not only of his wrath and judgment but of his mercy and loving kindness, his forbearance and his patience, all pointing to the mighty act of love which was their culmination, commemorated and perpetuated in the Mass.

To this came to be added the Apostolic preaching in Epistles and Gospels. The latter recited the teachings and the redemptive acts of Christ in the days of his flesh, the former proclaiming the Apostolic witness to the meaning and power of those words and acts. Thus the Liturgy itself, in so far as the People of God entered into it by active participation and lively understanding, served constantly to renew in them a vivid sense of being one with Christ in the life of his Mystical Body, of assimilating to

³ Acts 20, 7-11.

themselves and re-enacting in their own persons the power of Christ's redeeming love. In this way the life of Christ's Mystical Body has been communicated down the ages in and through a worship both sacrificial and sacramental.

But within the Liturgy also, and as an integral part of it, there has always been present in the person of the Bishop, the successor of the Apostles, the living voice of the Church to expound in urgent existential terms, and with Christ's immediate authority, the message of salvation embodied in the Scriptures and the worship of the Church. This is the office and purpose of Preaching. At first it was the Bishop alone who carried out this office, and the breviary contains many examples in the patristic homilies of the way they fulfilled it. As time went on and the Church expanded, priests were appointed by him, as at present, to assist him in his work. But the priest stands in the pulpit, on every occasion, only as the representative and delegate of the Bishop. The Bishop himself is directly the representative of Christ, he proclaims the gospel in Christ's name with apostolic authority.

Unfortunately there came a time when the Bishops of the West became great feudal Lords and statesmen who delegated many of their pastoral duties to others while keeping episcopal authority in their own hands. Thus the urgent responsibility of preaching the redemptive power of Christ in the assembly of the People of God was often neglected and tended to fall into disuse. It was in part to remedy the lack of preaching that the great mendicant orders were founded. The parochial clergy on the whole did not shoulder this responsibility; they were often, though by no means always, without the necessary capacity and lacked theological training. The mendicant friars on the other hand, though they often travelled far and wide on their mission of preaching, were relatively few in number and they developed in time a specialized form of sermon which sometimes bore little relation to the systematic expounding of the Faith which should have been part of the celebration of the Liturgy.

Meanwhile the Scriptural elements of the Liturgy, from the ninth century onwards, were in process of becoming embalmed in a language which to the majority of the people was dying or dead. The understanding of Latin was restricted to the small educated handful of society, mainly clerical; the rest were without books or the capacity to read them. It is a significant reflection on

the lack of preaching at the time of the Reformation that the Reformers of Elizabethan times, though anxious to have a preacher in every parish, were quite unable to secure this for several generations, as is evidenced by the Books of Homilies, which were issued by authority during that period and ordered to be read in Churches; they did not fall into general disuse for more than a century.

In the later middle ages the laity were on the whole perhaps uninstructed and ignorant because the Faith was seldom expounded to them, and over a long period they had been increasingly cut off from active and intelligent participation in the meaning of the Liturgical texts, which had once been the privilege of the faithful. When the revival of preaching began towards the end of the sixteenth century as a result of the reforms of the Council of Trent, the biblical elements of the Liturgy had long been inaccessible to the laity as a medium of active participation in the offering of Mass; they lay buried in the Latin language and there were no missals for the laity. The Bible itself moreover had become a dangerous book, because of its misuse by Protestant interpretation. Even though made more widely accessible by printing, the private reading of it, if not altogether forbidden, was certainly not widely encouraged; this was a distinctively Protestant habit. In consequence scriptural knowledge no longer formed a direct and substantive element in the religious education of Catholics and in particular of Catholics who could not read; and this at a time when it had become the very foundation of all forms of Protestantism.

The age was an age of catechisms and manuals of theology. These were inclined by nature to use the Bible as a source of proof-texts, confirmatory indeed of the definitions and credal statements of the teaching magisterium of the Church, but quoted in isolation and detached in consequence from the depth and richness to be found in the wholeness of their scriptural sources. In this way the *lex orandi* which delights to penetrate these sources by spiritual understanding and which is specially fostered by full participation in the Liturgy, tended to become relatively impoverished.

Today we are only just emerging from this state of things which the historical process had imposed upon western Christendom during many centuries reaching back to the age of Charle-

magne. At certain points it has resulted in the almost complete disappearance from practice of much that the Church of the first five centuries would have taken for granted, and notably active lay participation in the Liturgy such as can directly supply the Scriptural basis and background of worship, doctrine and Christian living. These things however are still there; the structure of the Liturgy still presupposes the active participation of the faithful and classical Catholic theology, exemplified supremely by the writings of St Thomas Aquinas, is still, and claims to be, no more than the effort of human reason to elucidate the depth and richness of the Scriptural revelation upon which the Word God has spoken and still speaks to men ultimately relies as its source.

To say this is in no way to disparage theology, the high purpose of which is to assist the mind towards a deeper insight into the mysteries of faith and to safeguard their proclamation from perversion. This is the function of creeds and definitions; though they enable the mind under the influence of the Holy Spirit to penetrate deeply into the Faith, the definitions themselves do not exhaust the depth of the mystery or the richness of its scriptural expression. Theology which makes definitions and compiles creeds works in abstract terms and calls philosophy to its aid; it is analytical in its approach and rightly so, for the human understanding can work in no other way. But though faith is an act of the mind it is governed by the will and is the possession of the whole person, the thinking, feeling, loving person. Its object too is not a proposition or a statement but God himself, the Trinity of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The very heart of faith is the union of persons in a relationship of knowledge and love; the person of the baptized Christian, the child of God, with the persons of the Godhead, in and through Christ our Lord, God made man, Redeemer and Saviour, the firstborn of many brethren.

The whole purpose of the Church in preaching the Faith is to convert, to bring about this union of knowledge and love in God which Christ effects in his members. But this cannot be done merely by teaching the Faith in the abstract terms of catechisms and definitions; these have their use and will be fruitful, but only on condition that this union has already been effected. All preaching and teaching must be concrete and personal before abstract thought about the truths of faith can be living thought. Christ

must be presented as he was in the days of his flesh and as the Scriptures present him. His redeeming work must be made manifest as the Church presents it in Sacrament and Liturgy. For too long much of our teaching and preaching and consequently much of our learning in school and seminary has remained in the realm of the abstract and needs to be transposed into the concrete and personal. The Bible must stand at both ends of our theology. Theology must be drawn from the Bible and must be put back again into the Bible to be prayed and preached.

'What is grace?' says the catechism, and its answer is: 'Grace is a supernatural gift of God, freely bestowed upon us for our sanctification and salvation.' Explain that clause by clause to a class of children or an adult congregation and, however skilfully you do it, their response will be almost negligible. But show them the giver of grace in the person of our Lord, as the Church shows him, not by explaining that he is a Person, the person of God the Son, having two natures divine and human, but by setting forth the things he did and now does for us, and so allowing them to *see* him and what he is. Then the response will be far different.

The best way, and indeed the only way, of making real to others the person of the Giver of grace is to be, at least in intention and urgent desire, a grace-filled and grace-possessed person oneself.



THE PULPIT PRESENTATION OF THE FAITH

FERDINAND VALENTINE, O.P.

THE subject-matter covered by this title is so wide in extent that we are in danger from the outset of being lost in generalities. For this reason I propose to explore one corner only of its extensive field, by confining myself to the parochial apostolate. I think you will find that the more general principles will emerge.

Let us begin with a quotation:

'Television is a blessing', an American Bishop said recently. 'Spiritually radio and television are beautiful examples of the inspired wisdom of the ages. Radio is like the Old Testament

. . . hearing of wisdom without seeing; television is like the New Testament because in it the wisdom becomes flesh and dwells among us. . . . We are thankful to radio and television for being the most spiritual symbols of the truth by which we are saved.'¹

Is that statement true or fanciful? You may have your own ideas about that. There are however one or two incontrovertible facts about this new situation. First, the size of the average radio and television audience is obviously larger than that which could be accommodated in any of our largest Cathedrals or even in St Peter's Square. Secondly, these modern instruments of diffusion lend added power to the individual apostle and give him a sense of achievement. It must be very gratifying to receive a spate of letters telling of help received and of numerous enquiries made for further information. Many converts owe their introduction to the Faith to radio and television. . . . The debate continues.

I

The trouble begins, however, at least in the present context, when these mass means of communication are thought largely to supersede the more traditional methods of the Church, or in any way to rival them. Radio and television cast a spell upon both audience and preacher; their ritual is impressive; rehearsals are carefully carried through; expert and experienced engineers are at one's service; everything is done efficiently, courteously, confidently.

'This thing is important', everyone seems to be reminding us. 'Mistakes cannot be tolerated. When the light goes on, remember—you are on the air!'

A similar situation is arising in our schools. These highly efficient means of mass instruction are now readily available, and if they are used as auxiliaries by school teachers who know their children—their mentality, background, apperceptive powers—then, as means of inspiration, they are legitimate.

But are harassed and overworked teachers sufficiently well-founded in their vocation to use these means with discretion, and not as substitutes? The size of the classes in the average school is increasing; and relatively the number of teachers is decreasing.

¹ Bishop F. Sheen, *Time*. November 19, 1956.

Most of these children have little home-life. Many are 'key-kids' or at least children whose parents go out to work. 'A few children who are undisciplined or worse', writes Doctor Lydiard Wilson, 'can infect a whole class, and the strain of dealing with the overwhelming numbers in such a class is well-nigh intolerable.' (Letter to the *Daily Telegraph*.) We begin then to see the nature of this assault of mass education through radio, television and other 'one-way means of communication' upon the schoolroom.² *Mutatis mutandis* the position is similar for the hard-working parochial priest in relation to his duty as teacher.

The meaning of this threat becomes clearer when seen from another angle. Briefly, the influence of the industrial revolution plus the invasion of applied science into human affairs, has created mass-society—that is, the grouping of men into large, congested areas of population. These in turn have created the need for a highly centralized authority. . . . It is hardly surprising that this trend should have affected the apostolate. On all sides one hears talk of amalgamation, and of a more unified and efficient exercise of control as a bulwark against a world-system which is massing power and prestige in the hands of the few. In the present context, the upshot of all this has been to create many national and international extra-parochial organizations. However necessary these may be, a certain fascination attaches to the big number, as though its efficacy were in direct proportion to its size. Mass meetings impress. To see crowds leaving Westminster Cathedral on a Sunday creates the illusion that the 'Romans' have indeed brought off a kind of spiritual *coup d'état*. Congresses, too, can be very inspiring, showing forth the latent dynamism of the Church. And the glamour and drive of these large, extra-parochial organizations (among which we must include religious orders of men and women) tend to distract the priest from his parish and to undermine his confidence in his unique and central position as teacher and father.

II

Let us never forget that the priest belongs to his people—to Tom, Dick and Harry. The apostolate can never be impersonal. We cannot save souls by committees; or direct them by means of an
2 cf. *The Psychology of Learning*, by B. R. Bugelski. p. 470.

electronic brain. The priest must be one who dwells among his people, one with whom they can speak, eat, walk, share the joys and sorrows of life. He is a real presence—not a voice in a box or a picture in a darkened room. In Christ he is shepherd. 'He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them.' (John 10, 3.) He knows them and they know and accept him. Through this mutual love and sympathy he learns *how* to teach them in the very act of teaching.

'For so great is the power of sympathy', writes St Augustine, 'that when people are affected by us as we speak and we by them as we learn, we dwell each in the other and thus both they, as it were, speak in us what they hear, while we, after a fashion, learn in them what we teach. . . . And the more so, the closer the friendship between them and us; for in proportion as we dwell in them through the bond of love, so do things which were old become new to us also.' (*De Catechizandis Rudibus.*)

In another place St Augustine says that some priests grow sad when preaching to the dull-witted; for they must come down from their lofty heights and explain step by step through long and devious paths what they themselves can perceive with one rapid sweep of the mind.

'Should this happen to us', he continues, 'let us consider him who gave us the example. . . . However widely our spoken word may differ from the rapidity of our understanding, greater by far is the difference between mortal flesh and equality with God. And yet . . . he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . he became weak unto the weak, that he might gain the weak . . . he became a little child in the midst of us, like a nurse cherishing her children. . . . For it is no pleasure to murmur broken and mutilated words into the ear unless love invite us. And yet men wish to have children for whom they may do this. And sweeter is it for the mother to chew morsels small and put them into the mouth of her tiny son, than to chew and consume larger morsels herself. . . . And so, if the intellect delight us by penetrating the very essence of things, let us also take delight in understanding how love, the more graciously it descends to the lowliest station, the more irresistibly it finds its way to the inmost recesses of the heart, because it seeks nothing of those to whom it descends, except their eternal salvation.' (*Loc. cit.*)

Some years ago Father Vincent McNabb distilled the essence of this wisdom of St Augustine.

'When what we say is understood and accepted by Bridget', he said, 'then we are most probably right.'

For him, Bridget was the poor, honest, uneducated Catholic housewife and mother. He meant that when we can so break down truth that it may be understood and assimilated by simple folk, then we know not only when we are right but are also deeply conscious of our own ignorance. The priest, says St Augustine, should not be like the hawk that swoops down from the heights; he must be *Father*. Men cherish their babes into whose ear they murmur the broken and mutilated words of baby talk. *If we are to teach, let us first learn to love.*

It is in this context that we begin to understand the importance of chastity and humility as apostolic—one might almost say, pedagogic—virtues. As priests we have not only chosen to love Christ but to love him as he loves us—with a virgin heart; and our unconditional abandonment in Christ to the will of the Father is rewarded by an increased capacity to love humanly. Chastity so liberates the human love of the dedicated apostle, that freed from the ties of marriage, it might embrace the world. The priest is Christ's man; his hands, feet, mind and heart are the instruments of Christ; in Christ he loves those most who are most in need. We discuss teaching techniques in vain if this love is absent. Love makes us *want* to break the bread of truth into morsels that souls may be mentally nourished and inspired to learn.

From such chaste love flows humility, the desire to come down to the level of those we are to teach and to learn from them. We must know what they are—the level, that is, of their knowledge. Therein lies the secret of right method. The people themselves will show us how to set about our teaching. But we must first become like unto them. The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. So too by analogy our loving sympathy makes us men of the people that by dwelling amongst them we may learn to teach and to uplift them from within as priests of God. That is why the parochial apostolate is so very important. The priest is the chosen apostle of Christ, a man of God sent to become a man of the people; the bearer of a message who finds little difficulty in casting it into the mental mould of those amongst whom he lives. It was because Christ was a Galilean peasant-craftsman, one of the people and at their service, that he knew how to trans-

late his divine message into language they could understand.

So the priest as teacher is sometimes alone with a soul in the confessional or sick room, as the Lord met Nicodemus by night. He teaches small groupings of his people as the Lord taught the Twelve by the lakeside. He speaks to his congregation in church as Christ spoke to the Jews in the synagogue. The true priest as the bearer of Good-tidings loves to pass them on, to share them with others. Almost everything he says or does has meaning as an apostle....

But it is from the pulpit that he speaks formally and officially in the name of Christ.

III

If all this is true, how best can the pulpit be used as a teaching medium? In one sense it is far from ideal. For instance, if it is impossible to teach effectively an heterogeneous mass of three million radio listeners, is it any easier to teach, say, three hundred of the faithful gathered for Sunday Mass?

Sir Ronald Gould, a former Secretary of the N.U.T., said recently:

'In classes of forty or fifty children there can be no individual instruction worth talking about.'

This was repeated more recently at the Annual Conference at Scarborough, when the newly-elected Secretary, Mr Evan S. Owen, said in his inaugural address:

'Let us get rid of the old idea that the smaller the child the bigger should be the class. Classes should be small enough for individual attention.'

It is generally accepted in the teaching profession that for the best results the class should never exceed thirty children. This means, of course, children of the same age, with more or less the same apperception. What chance then has the priest of inspiring a group of three hundred of the faithful to think, composed as they are of young and old, the mentally alert and the dull-witted, the learned and the ignorant; those who are anxious to know more about God and those who are spiritually deaf? The priest can inform most of these people, but how can he inspire them to think?

However, let us beware of jumping to conclusions. There is a

vast difference between the pulpit and the school-room. The object of the sermon is to discover the truth that is a way of life, to announce and explain the word of God. At such moments, supernatural processes are set in motion which elude any effort to classify them strictly in relation to the pedagogic art. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are operative in those who love God and wish to find closer union with him. The Gift of Wisdom is a perfection of the understanding enabling the just man to judge of all things according to divine standards, to see things from God's point of view. But although the Gift of Wisdom is essentially the perfection of the mind under the influence of the Holy Spirit, its cause is in the will, in the loving union with God through charity, *secundum quamdam connaturalitatem*.

It is, as St Augustine says, the loving soul that understands, and whose judgments are often more in accordance with the mind of God than those of expert theologians who lack the Gift of Wisdom.

We say of these godly people that they relish divine things; that they are inquisitive to find out more about God, in order to serve him more faithfully. It is in response to this yearning of the loving heart that Christ passes on assimilable truth through the priest speaking in his name. In this context of divine charity then we envisage the reciprocal influence of the priest as exponent of the Christian *way of life*, and his people.

On January 17th, 1895, scarcely two months after his arrival at Venice as Patriarch, Cardinal Sarto, later Pope Pius X, issued an *ad clerum*. He wrote:

'We have far too much preaching and far too little real instruction. Have done with these flowers of eloquence; preach to the people with simplicity and piety; give them the truths of the Faith and the precepts of the Church; tell them the meaning of virtue and the danger of vice. Even people who according to the standards of the world are considered learned are surprisingly ignorant of the most fundamental truths of their religion, and in some cases are not so well instructed as small children.'

'The people thirst to know the truth; give it to them; give them what they need for the salvation of their souls. The sermon should be constructed according to the capacity of the people; it should be aimed to touch the heart and not merely to

charm the ear. Its result should not be the glory of the preacher but the repentance of the sinner and an increase in those who approach the sacraments. Oratorical eloquence has nothing apostolic in itself; it is purely profane and wholly lacking in supernatural influence. The sermon might be pleasing to the people, but their hearts are not touched; they leave the House of God as they entered. To quote St Augustine: *Mirabantur, sed non convertebantur.*

Still, granting the truth of all this, it would be utter folly to pretend that as apostles we should not study the basic principles of the learning process, and accommodate our method of teaching to them. We have already tried to explain that it is a right attitude to those we teach which enables us to adopt and use right method; the attitude, that is, of 'giving ourselves away' to others, of putting ourselves in the place of others, that by so doing we may know the degree of their knowledge and their ability to learn—or, more colloquially, how much they can take in. We have to inspire them with the will to learn, and want to help them to grow in knowledge.

IV

Perhaps at this moment you may be saying to yourselves, 'Why isn't he more practical? Surely he could tell us that first we should speak to be heard, that we should know what we are talking about, that we should use simple language and helpful analogy, that wherever possible we should base our teaching on the Scriptures?'

There are two answers to this question: first (more personal), I have met few priests who have not had their own decided views on this matter of presentation and technique. One can only presume it is a very individual affair. Secondly, one may know all the tricks of the trade in theory and yet fail utterly in front of the people. To stoop and condescend to them is unworthy, and in any case sheer waste of time. We must respect, love and know those we are talking to. Nothing is more pathetic than the learned preacher who, so to say, 'mugs up' topical allusion, and then in his sermon refers to Manchester United with a knowing smile, or to the Treble Chance, or to Tommy Steele, when for all he knows Tommy Steele may play outside left for the United. Or again,

a priest may be familiar with the text-books and literature of Froebel and Montessori and yet scare the wits out of young children, or if they are boys and a little older, find them unmanageable.

'Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart.' As teachers we must be infinitely patient and have the humility to learn from those we would teach, whatever be their mental capacity. For just as the priest can stoop and pretend to speak from the height of a child, so he can stand on tip-toe and pretend to know more than he does about theology, art, philosophy, anthropology and what not. The best margarine, the hoardings tell us, is indistinguishable from butter. Or as C. S. Forester once said of his Hornblower series: 'You Navy-men would be amused if you realized how little I know about ships.'

Let us, then, do our best and have the courage to be and to accept ourselves. How can we get together with others in search of truth if all the time we are trying to be somebody else? The best way of getting to know others is to be honest about oneself, and not to be afraid of being found out. We priests, alas, soon learn the value of cheek and of the resolve never to get stuck for an answer. As an old Dominican said of a young friar some years ago: 'At a moment's notice that man would undertake a Caesarean section or take command of the Atlantic Fleet.'

Or as one teenager said to another at a retreat I was giving: 'He'd be all right, dear, if he didn't think he was God.'

V

Again we ask: How best can the pulpit be used as a teaching medium?

Absolutely speaking, we can help others to acquire knowledge in two ways: the one more direct, 'telling', and the other indirect, which may be called 'revealing', or from the student's point of view 'discovery'. The teacher can either give the relationship between two ideas, eliciting little or no contribution from the student, or he can create the right mental situation whereby the student can discover the nexus or relationship for himself, and stimulate him to reflect, to test and examine, to suspend judgment in the quest of truth until he is sure he knows that he knows.

It is perfectly obvious then that naturally speaking the pulpit

can never be any more than a means of 'telling'. We are not suggesting that it is ineffective. It may have to be supplemented, but at least it is necessary as a means of informing the faithful and of reminding them of the Church's teaching, their duties as Catholics and the priorities of the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless it remains a 'one-way' teaching medium, like radio, television and film. The priest cannot give to each listener an individual attention.

Can it ever be sufficient to 'tell' people about the faith? Surely they should be led to *think* about it and to integrate it vitally into their everyday lives; to look upon it as a *way of living*—a participation in the Christ-life extending to the thoughts, words, interests, actions of every moment of the day. If this is true, then the presentation of the Faith from the pulpit must be supplemented by parochial activities of every kind—confessional direction, retreats, guilds, confraternities, discussion groups, the training of catechists, dramatic and choral activities and so on. The inspiration 'to think about the Faith' should not spring from any motive extraneous to the life of the learner, but from his vital need for the plenitude of the Christian life. It is this which fosters and brings to fruition the learning process inaugurated in the pulpit, making the immanent activity of the mind a function of the very life that inspires it, and never disassociating the things of faith from environment. These group meetings which supplement the presentation of the Faith from the pulpit become a living experience; and the more ardently the members of these groups seek life in its true Christian fulness, the more steadfastly will they seek truth. The Church alone who is the appointed guardian of truth can give the life which inspires it; and the priest can teach in her name only in so far as he himself participates in the Christ-life.

Let us end this paper by stressing once again the need for individual attention in the presentation of the Faith.

'Getting at the meaning of things', wrote the late Father Castielo, s.j., 'is as personal an operation as digesting one's food, or getting well from an illness. No one can digest or get well or see the meaning of a thing for another. The duty of the teacher therefore is to place the student in the mental situation whereby he is able to abstract meaning for himself. . . .'

'Students learn', remarks B. R. Bugelski, 'but teachers do not teach in the sense that they do anything to the student. No one

can knock sense into somebody else. The function of the teacher is to prepare the situation and the chain of events, in such a fashion that the learner acquires the "connections".³

The teacher therefore is not the efficient cause of learning. The efficient causes of learning are reality and thought. The teacher is the instrument. He creates the mental situation and stimulates the immanent activity of the student; makes him want to attend and want to learn. It is the part of the student to abstract the meaning of a thing from the concrete situation. That is why inspiration is the highest qualification of any teacher.

It is therefore most important for the priest who desires to bring forth meaning, to take into account the 'apperception' of those he is teaching, the contents of their minds also, and to link up new ideas with old. It is his duty to prepare the apperception in such a way that when he introduces a new idea, the student will be able to correlate it with what he already knows. As this power of perception and assimilation is personal and differs in each case, individual attention on the part of the teacher is absolutely essential.

Truth is as native to us as love. And it is our privilege to foster the growth of knowledge and to pass on to others a love of truth by patiently assisting them in its joyful discovery. But this requires a contemplative attitude to life, whereas our restless world is impatient to be informed, to be told, as though education were a kind of stitching together of a heap of knowledge. That is why insistence on modern means of mass communication is so deleterious to the human mind, and particularly to that contemplative attitude we need so badly in our quest for truth and the deep things of the spirit. Meaning is a oneness. Only when a man unifies does he understand.

VI

To conclude, then, let me summarize this paper in the following fourfold statement.

The priest as teacher should be inspired by the love of souls.

His approach should be directed by a knowledge of the needs of particular people, their background, language, education and so on. Only then can he help them to assimilate new ideas and to understand the things of God.

³ *The Psychology of Learning*, pp. 457 and 460.

The pulpit is an instrument in this process of stimulating the immanent, mental activity of the faithful; it informs, reminds, encourages, uplifts, warns. Above all, the sermon or instruction in a public church is a divinely privileged occasion requiring episcopal sanction.

But to be completely effective, particularly in our own day as a means of presenting the Faith, the pulpit must be supplemented by group activities, through which individual attention and a vital integration into the fulness of the Christian life are made possible.



PAROCHIAL SERMONS.

BEDE BAILEY, O.P.

RECENTLY I was given the new H.M.V. issue of Chaliapin singing excerpts from the opera *Boris Godunov*. A copy of the Russian text, with a line-by-line literal translation, is provided with the record. Chaliapin's wonderful voice and artistic sense make a whole of the music and of the words, so that even if one were quite unable to follow their meaning, some of the highly-taut emotions would be received by the listener.

I put the record on for a friend one afternoon and gave him the text. At a first hearing it is not easy to follow. For twenty minutes we listened to a great dramatic performance. When it was finished, I asked what he thought of it. 'He had a wonderful voice; and he was putting his whole heart into it, but I couldn't follow why he sang just as he did. Listening to him was rather like being at Mass, with the priest going through a whole rigmarole of different actions, and using different voices, and taking up different positions, and I don't know what he's doing it all for. He's putting his whole heart and soul into it, but most of us don't know why he acts as he does. It's our fault, of course, for not taking the trouble to find out.' I do not think the last remark

was made to quieten clerical susceptibilities. And of course it is only partly true. One thinks of the thousands of people going to Mass on Sunday mornings, and evenings now too. They go for all sorts of reasons: some out of duty; others because they have the habit of going; or because they are expected to go by wife, husbands, parents, or children; or just because of what the neighbours might say if their absence was noticed; and some go for our Lord's sake, because they want to be there when for our sakes he re-presents on the altar his passion and death.

The same state of affairs is present throughout much of the Catholic code of behaviour and belief; and for many it is little more than just a code. Otherwise it could not so easily be shed. Think of the number of Catholics, for example, who have had an average amount of instruction, and yet get married in register offices in order to avoid what they are afraid may be a troublesome and embarrassing interview with the priest. How many Catholics are there who think, in their heart of hearts, that many of the 'rules' of the Church are out of date, crusty, almost impossible of achievement in our world? Sometimes they even think them wrong. They do not realize how false it is to think of these things just as 'rules', made by professional law-makers. It is a pity, to say the least, that there seems to be so little understanding of the vast difference between the laws of God and those of man, even when those of man are part of the laws of the Church; between the prohibition not to eat flesh meat on Fridays, for example, and the command that we should love our neighbours as ourselves.

In the first volume of his *Reformation in England*, Mgr Philip Hughes gives an analysis of the kind of instruction the Catholics of England were receiving from the clergy before the storm broke. He asks 'the great question that recurs at more than one crisis of this story, namely, how far the Catholic of those times was adequately instructed in the nature of what he was doing. . . . Never, at any time, more than in these centuries [of the Middle Ages] did Catholics stand in greater need of constant reminder that among the acts of that virtue whose object is the worship of God—the virtue specifically called Religion—it is the internal acts that are all-important, the intellect's activities of prayer, and the will's activity of devotion. The virtue specifically called Religion presupposes indeed, for the reality and fruitfulness of its

various acts, a will wholly devoted to God: and this devotedness in the will derives (as to its natural sources) from deep and rooted conviction in the intelligence, from truths alive, truths that are not assented to merely as speculations, but are realities that penetrate the whole mental make-up, intelligence, passions, likes and dislikes—truths that have come to do all this as a result of incessant preoccupation with them on the part of man, as the effect of meditation. And the chief truths, meditation on which produces this effect, and so the needed devoted will, are the truths of man's utter helplessness without God, and of God's infinite will to save in love. Here is the natural source of the religion that alone matters, the religion personal to the human being, the thing secret between himself and God, the all-important conquest of the Kingdom of God over the heart of man. Here are those truths, in other words, which, if a man does not everlastingly recall and dwell upon, he will never break the surface of religious practice. And at all times, to effect this conviction in the minds of others, to assist the transformation from speculation to realization, has been the chief office of the preacher of the Gospel. He must offer more than logical argument, as he sets forth the Christian mysteries, for God came to save through these mysteries, not logicians, but men.' (pp. 93-94.)

What was true in 1500 is equally true now, and the lack of this proper instruction could have the same terrible consequences. ‘“On its purely doctrinal side, then, the English pulpit of the waning Middle Ages has little inspiration to offer”’, writes Philip Hughes, quoting Dr G. R. Owst (*Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*). ‘If Dr Owst’s reconstruction is exact, we need go little further in our search for the secret of the coming general apostasy, and of the extraordinary phenomenon that so often, in the course of a single lifetime, the English were ready to endure radical changes and counter changes in religious life.’ (p. 98.)

It is in church alone that most of us have the chance of learning from early childhood until our death. What do we need to be told? Surely, almost all the time, about the solid and awe-inspiring foundations of our religion. We all need to learn that God became man and died for us. We have all heard it, but until we have possessed the truth and it has grown into our lives as a part of ourselves, we still need to learn; and even if we are good learners, we can never exhaust the knowledge of his love for us.

What sort of a person do people think God-made-man is? During his lifetime here what did he look like? Do people think he looked like the statue of the Sacred Heart in their parish church? How did he behave in certain circumstances? How was it that during a few months of his life he managed to create such a reputation for himself that he became the best-known person in his country? People crowded to hear him, or just to see him. He became a menace to those established in high places, but the hope and pride of simple people. He was received into the houses of those who suspected and feared him and, such was the force of his personality, those houses became open to the waifs and strays of society while he was in them, just because he was there. He was himself homeless and dependent on the gifts of others for the necessities of life; yet he could make the grandest of claims for himself, and was not laughed at by his enemies, but feared. He was gentle, lovable, and yet tough, in mind and body.

Is it untrue to say that our Lord is the only reason for Christianity? Without him there would be no such religion. Without him there is no Christianity. To learn about him is the absolute necessity.

If he really is the son of God made man, who died for us; and if it is the fact that he could have won his purpose and redeemed us in innumerable other ways; but that he accepted the way of his suffering and crucifixion to try and prove to us once and for all how much we are worth to him and how deep is his love for us—at the heart of all love, said Mgr Knox, is an element of desperation; and if he knows all about us because he is our creator as well as our saviour; then how can it be that he ever asks us to do anything, or believe anything, that is not the best for us? He does not make rules for their own sakes. He does not command because he likes to. He is not particularly interested in regulations as such. But he is wholly interested in us, and in the best for us. Everything that he wants from us, and everything that he does for us, is because of his relentless concern for us.

Many people slip away from the Church because they have never grasped the need for religion. And sometimes it is even worse than that. They do not even understand the natural law, and why it should be kept. They understand what is little better than the law of the jungle. Man, as a thinking person, who can judge the causes of things, and the results of what he does, either

for good or ill, is someone remote from their lives. That is concerned with behaviour, with morals. But belief comes before morals, since our behaviour, or at any rate our consciences, will depend on what we believe.

Nowadays, it seems that almost anything can be explained and given its scientific causes, and the pressure to discard God the creator is constant. Once we do that, there is no need for God the redeemer, because there is no such thing as sin, or goodness, in the Christian meaning of the words. Our Lord then becomes no more than he was to the superior Jews, a nuisance and a trouble-maker. Christianity is judged to be a cause of many of the world's problems.

We need to go back to the root of things and, in spite of the smiles it may cause, to learn again from the inspired word of God; to hear again the voice of God declaring, 'I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the house of bondage'; and to learn from the New Testament the way in which we were rescued, and who our rescuer is, and how he has taken us into his own house.



FROM THE PEW

MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE

THE picture is of a medium-sized church, well filled with mothers and fathers and children of all ages—a baby probably intent on also being heard, and dozens of very small children, restless, crawling about, biting father's ear and being shushed by mother. Besides the family groups there are young men and young girls, more or less aware of one another and the show they are putting up. As with the family groups, the old and the young may or may not have missals, a prayer-book, their rosary-beads. While one would hope that those who have come to Mass, armed with nothing more than their offering, are contemplatives who have passed beyond the stage of actually saying prayers and wondering whether mental prayer or the prayer of quiet is best suiting their spiritual progress, it is not, I think, uncharitable to assume that a high percentage are in church simply because Sunday Mass is an obligation under pain of mortal

sin, because it is the custom to which they have been brought up, or because of some more or less clear conviction that bodily presence at Sunday Mass, with an attempt now and then to remember what they are in church for, is an act of religion.

Such, I take it, is the preacher's normal congregation. Such is the preacher's opportunity. We do, of course, know that attendance at Mass with the right intention is supernaturally worth infinitely more than the words of even a preacher-genius capable, in a few minutes' talk, of riveting the attention of all—except the babies—on words calculated to raise minds from cooking the dinner or 'shall I see Jane this evening?' to Jacob's ladder pitched between Heaven and Bermondsey West. Almighty God, knowing his people, not to mention the preacher, has kindly arranged all that. Still, we must suppose that giving us so much, virtually gratis, he not only expects us to respond within the narrow limits of our feebleness, but that he will answer our small efforts by those disproportionate graces which will keep him close to us and us close to him both during Mass itself and those more difficult hours of the day and week when dissipation, worldliness, temptation and sin beset us. Doubtless, if the preacher could rouse us all to a sense of spiritual reality where the stupendous Sacrifice of the Mass is concerned, we might come to need his services less, the grace of the Mass itself helping us during the week. But that is unlikely to happen, and meanwhile we have to acknowledge that the preacher, whoever he may be, gifted or otherwise, holy man or one less holy, is given every Sunday morning the opportunity of waking up slumbering souls to what is happening in church and helping them to carry on another week as conscious Christians (however feeble) rather than as men and women indistinguishable to themselves or others from their fellow men and women who have darkened no church door for many years.

As one person out of that multitude of Catholics who go to Mass every Sunday I ought, I suppose, to have a tremendous amount to say as to what I and my fellow lay Catholics would find most spiritually beneficial from the one weekly sermon or instruction or talk which we are all likely to hear, namely the few minutes after the church notices have been read. Alas, I have not! All I have so far been made aware of in my mind, as I reflect on the subject, is the obvious disproportion between what any priest can manage to say in a few minutes, Sunday after Sunday, and

what I should personally need to hear said if the Sunday sermon were permanently to lift me up a step on that Jacob's Ladder. But perhaps indirectly I have been helped, since from now onwards, I shall try not to add my voice to those of my fellow parishioners who emerge from church saying, 'Gosh, what a rotten sermon!' And what follows is, autobiographically, true.

For very many years I used to look upon the sermon as a bore, always hoping against hope that the priest, having finished his notices, would feel too tired to embark on a sermon, however short. I suppose that today I do know a bit more about my religion and its implications than I used to and I suppose that I have more competence to judge the value of sermons, yet where once I dreaded the bad sermon and had little expectation of a good one, I now look forward to *any* sermon. In honesty I must also admit that I like short ones.

This may be due to the fact that I have come to learn (in middle life) something of the real meaning of the Mass—as distinguished from brief catechetical formulae—and realize that profiting from hearing the Word of God and other pastoral instruction is very much part of the full action of the Church, priest and priestly people, as 'my sacrifice and yours' is offered to the Eternal Father.

The sermon is, of course, only a part of this instruction which reaches us, or should reach us, even when no sermon is preached, through the reading of Scripture and the prayers of the Mass. Unfortunately, this has become in practice a very passive instruction. Those who have no Missal or do not trouble to read it receive no instruction whatever except for the reading in the common tongue of the Epistle and Gospel. Even at Sunday parish Masses this is not always done. Long notices may prove to be sufficient excuse for omitting the reading. A pastoral letter quite frequently means that most of the congregation will have no idea of what the Epistle and Gospel have to teach them. I have also noticed that in dioceses where the bishop insists on an instruction, however short, the omission of reading the Epistle and Gospel is frequently to be met with. Surely this is wrong.

All this is no doubt due to pressure of time where many Sunday Masses have to be celebrated in order to meet the needs of our large urban congregations, a high proportion of whom take advantage of the easier fasting laws to go to Communion at Masses throughout the morning. One is bound to wonder

whether one day the solution will not have to be found in a far more extensive use of the vernacular in the instructional parts of the Mass.

As things are, there are churches today where a priest or lector reads the Epistle and Gospel in English while the celebrant reads the Latin quietly at the altar. In children's Masses and in others a priest will sometimes help the congregation by reading the Proper in English and parts of the Ordinary. So far as time allows he may otherwise help the congregation, for example, by reminding it of the commemorations of the living and of the dead. Abroad such methods of helping the people to understand what is going on, to learn and to pray and to act intelligently, are frequently met with.

The reader may well wonder why I am concentrating on the Mass, especially the Sunday Mass for the people, when my subject is preaching. But today sermons outside Mass are becoming rarer and congregations listening to them smaller. Nor is there much hope of a change. Evening Mass is likely to spread and distractions available to people, such as television, will keep the masses away. Apart from this, it seems to me logical to think of preaching as part and parcel of the Mass for the people and, consequently, to think of it as integrated with the Mass's liturgical instruction. The old practice—now not so common because of instructional courses—of basing the sermon on the Epistle and Gospel of the Sunday, or more usually the Gospel, is in harmony with this view of preaching.

The main question of preaching boils down therefore today to the best use of the five to ten minutes which the sequence of Masses in our urban districts allows. Even in rural districts the one or two priests available are likely to have to say two or even three Masses in widely separated chapels or halls, and this kind of short instruction is the most they can possibly manage. This, by the way, is a point which a congregation, presumably in a disposition of charity since it is hearing Mass, should not overlook. We can all imagine ourselves rivalling the balance, diction and ease of the television or radio speaker, but even were many priests naturally gifted in the spoken word or even carefully trained in the art of preaching, they alone have to carry the burden of preaching two or three times a morning in the course of the spiritual concentration on the Mass, possibly travelling and almost certainly expected

to show themselves to the people as they leave church. And it all has to be done, at best, on a cup of tea. Perhaps they could help us to more charitable thoughts about them by occasionally reminding us of the situation!

How best then to use the precious time for the benefit of us, the congregation? I suppose one would get as many answers to this question as there are people in church. Any one writer has to be humble enough to admit that he can really only speak for himself.

It seems to me logical that the Mass of the Sunday should itself be the preacher's text—not only the Gospel, but the Epistle, the Collect and other changing parts of the Mass. This is not so difficult as it seems, for there are excellent books available which in perhaps a couple of pages bring out the place of any particular Sunday Mass in the liturgical cycle and the special meaning and teaching of that Sunday's liturgy. No doubt this means that one year would be very similar to another, but there are surely endless variations on this rich theme. We are told that in a few years the liturgy will be revised in such a way as to bring more of Scripture into the Sunday Masses in a cycle of a number of years rather than the present annual cycle. The thought of this reminds of how much would be missed by congregations of the future if no vernacular were used or if the priests did not make the Church's enriched teaching the subject of their sermons and instructions. Surely it is possible for even a very busy priest to read the kind of book I have suggested—some modern missals also give excellent brief explanations of the special message of each Sunday Mass—and instruct in his own words and according to his own feelings on the theme thus easily put before him.

This would be all the easier, if the preacher endeavoured to apply the spirit of the Mass to the circumstances of his congregation's lives, locally, nationally and internationally. How very rarely does one hear from the pulpit references to world, national and local news—excepting in the last case the parish fête or whist drive or pools. How very rarely even to Church news, to a papal encyclical, to the persecution of our brethren, to our relations with other Christian communities. Perhaps I am prejudiced here, but each week the Catholic papers cover a great deal of relevant material to some of which at least the priest could surely refer as of spiritual importance to the Catholic, especially

the one who least realizes the fact that being a Catholic is being an actor in the continuing drama of God's love for man.

My point is that Catholics today have to live their Christian lives outside the four walls of the church and outside the sanctuary of their own homes into which, anyway, the press, radio and television penetrate. It is desirable not only that the preacher's message should be essentially one of spiritual direction, based on the Mass's liturgy, but that it should be spiritual direction with the windows open on the world in terms with which our Christian life has to be lived.

A small example will show what I mean. Two Masses remain vividly in my memory. In a commentated Mass in Paris, the priest at the pause for the commemorations of the living and the dead very briefly reminded us of the need for our prayers in the foreign mission field. It was Mission Sunday. I had forgotten until he mentioned it. The other was in the south of France. The priest spoke of a serious railway accident during the night not far away. It had been described on the radio, but not as yet in the papers. Somehow these topical and actual allusions made the Mass seem more real, more purposeful. We were there and then engaged on practical work.

An instruction, however short, on the spirit and teaching of that actual Mass, applied in a practical way to our jobs as Christians that day, that week, would surely give heart and inspiration even to those who come to church out of a sense of obligation and without bothering to bring a missal or even a rosary. It would awaken the somnolent and catch the attention of mothers and fathers intent on keeping their children quiet. As for those who feel rather smug because they have their missals and are conscientiously trying to participate in the Mass with their minds and bodies—well, perhaps a reminder that the fruits of their devotions are needed by others as well as by themselves would not be out of place and would be spiritually beneficial.

May I end by suggesting with all respect to those who must know much more about this subject than I do that what is wanted in our preaching today is not superior intelligence or the gift of the spoken word, but a little more constructive and, dare I say it, apostolic imagination.

ST AUGUSTINE ON CATECHIZING*Translated by HUGH FARMER, O.S.B.**Introductory Note*

St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo 396-430, wrote the treatise De catechizandis rudibus for Deogratias, a deacon of Carthage, in about the year 400. It describes both the subject-matter and the method of catechetics but also includes most useful instruction on preaching and teaching. St Augustine continued the 'narration' or historical exposition of the truths of faith from the Bible down to his own day; the personal 'exhortation' he recommends does not seem to have been obligatory before his time. The treatise, which depends in part on St Irenaeus' Constitutiones Apostolorum and Demonstratio Praedicationis Apostolicae, has been extraordinarily influential in the history of preaching. It has been translated into English at least seven times; the following abridgment owes much to the edition of J. P. Christopher, Augustinus, De Catechizandis Rudibus (Washington, D.C. 1926).

YOU have asked me, brother Deogratias, to write you something useful about instructing candidates for the catechumenate, for you tell me that at Carthage, where you are a deacon, those who receive their first instruction in the Christian faith are often brought to you, because you are supposed to have great facility in catechizing with your thorough knowledge of the faith and your charm of style. But you are almost always in difficulties about how to present those truths which we believe as Christians: where to begin and end the narration, whether to add a personal exhortation or only those precepts by whose observance the Christian life and profession are maintained. You have acknowledged with regret that often in a long discourse lacking in warmth you have become commonplace and wearisome to yourself, not to mention him whom you were trying to instruct, and the other listeners; and so you felt obliged to entreat me by the charity I owe you to set down something in writing for you, occupied though I am with other things.

With regard to your own particular difficulty, I would not like you to be disturbed because your discourse often seems to yourself

wearisome and worthless. It may well not seem so to the listener, but simply because you earnestly desire them to hear something better, your own words seem unworthy of them. For my part I am nearly always dissatisfied with my preaching. I desire something better, which I often enjoy interiorly before I begin to express my thought in words; and when my expression is inadequate, I am very disappointed that my tongue has not answered the demands of my mind. I desire my hearer to understand all that I can understand, but I feel I am not speaking well enough to accomplish this. Understanding fills the mind as it were with a rapid flash of light, while the expression of it in speech is slow and drawn-out, a very different process; and while speech is being formed, understanding has already hidden itself in the secret recesses of the mind.

People listen to us with much greater pleasure when we ourselves enjoy this same work of instruction, for the thread of our discourse is affected by the joy that we ourselves experience, and is consequently delivered more easily and received more gratefully. It is not a hard task to give directions about the beginning and end of the narration of the truths we must believe, or about how it should be of varying length yet always complete, and when a shorter or when a longer form should be used. But our chief concern should be that the teacher enjoys catechizing, for the more he enjoys it, the more effective he will prove. An appropriate maxim is ready to hand: if *God loves a cheerful giver*¹ of material wealth, how much more one of spiritual wealth? But the catechist's possession of this cheerfulness at the right time depends on the mercy of God who gave this teaching.

Therefore, as God prompts us, we will first discuss the method of narration, as you desire, then the duty of admonition and exhortation, and, lastly how to obtain the right cheerfulness.



The narration is complete when the catechumen is instructed first from the text *In the beginning God created heaven and earth*² down to the present period of Church history. But this does not mean that we should repeat verbatim the whole Pentateuch with Judges, Kings and Esdras, the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles (if we know them by heart), or relate in our own words what

¹ 2 Cor. 2, 7.

² Gen. 2, 1.

these books contain, and thus develop and explain them; for this there is no time and no need. But we ought to present the whole matter in a general summary and choose out those wonderful facts which are more readily heard and which constitute the principal points. These should not be presented as it were rolled up in a parchment and snatched away at once, but by dwelling on them we should, so to speak, untie it and spread them out to view, for the minds of our hearers to examine and admire. We should include the other details in a short abridgment. In this way the points we wish to emphasize are brought into prominence by keeping the others in the background; the mind of our hearer which we wish to stimulate does not reach them exhausted, and his memory is not confused.

In everything we should keep in mind the aim of the precept, which is *charity from a pure heart, with a good conscience and unfeigned faith*,³ to which we should refer all that we say, and to which we should direct the attention of our listener. And in fact everything written in Scripture before our Lord's Incarnation had no other purpose than to announce his coming and prefigure the Church, that is, the people of God throughout all nations, which is his Body, and in which are included all the just who lived in this world even before his coming, and who believed that he would come just as we believe he has come. They were not separated from him by being his precursors but rather were joined to him by their obedience to his will.

Indeed what greater reason could there be for the Lord's coming than that God might manifest his love, ardently recommending it amongst us, because, *when we were as yet enemies, Christ died for us*?⁴ And it was for this reason also, that in so far as love is the end of the commandment and the fulfilment of the law,⁵ we also may love one another, and even as he laid down his life for us, we also may lay down our life for our brethren.⁶ With regard to God himself, in so far as *he first loved us*⁷ and *spared not his only Son but delivered him up for us all*,⁸ even if at first we found it irksome to love him, now at least it should not prove irksome to

3 1 Tim. 1, 5.

4 Rom. 5, 8.

5 Cf. 1 Tim. 1, 5 and Rom. 13, 10.

6 Cf. 1 John 3, 16.

7 1 John 4, 19.

8 Rom. 8, 32.

return this love. For there is nothing that invites love more than anticipation in loving, and that heart is excessively hard which, even if unwilling to bestow love, refuses to return it.

If therefore Christ came chiefly that man might learn how much God loves him, and thus begin to burn with love for him by whom he was first loved, and so love his neighbour too at Christ's bidding and example; and if all Holy Scripture which was written before Christ was written to foretell his coming; and if whatever has since been committed to writing and established by divine authority tells of Christ and counsels love, it is evident that *on these two commandments depend not only the whole law and the prophets*,⁹ but also all the inspired books which were written for our good in later times and handed down to us. Therefore in the Old Testament the New is concealed, and in the New the Old is revealed. In keeping with that concealment carnal men, understanding only carnally, were and are made subject to the fear of punishment. But in keeping with this revelation spiritual men, understanding spiritually, were and are made free by the bestowal of love. And since nothing is more opposed to love than envy, and the mother of envy is pride, the same Lord Jesus Christ, God-Man, is both an example of divine love towards us and a model among us of man's lowness, in order that our swollen conceit may be healed by a greater antidote. The pride of man is a great disaster, but the humility of God is an even greater mercy.

With this love then as the end to which all you say is referred, give your instructions in such a way that your listener may believe by hearing, may hope by believing, and may love by hope.

At the end of the narration we should make known to him the hope of the resurrection, and with due regard for his capacity and the time available combat by discussion the vain scoffings of unbelievers about the resurrection of the body, and speak to him of the future last judgment, favourable to the good, severe to the wicked, and certain for every one. And after recounting the punishments of the wicked with loathing and horror, we should describe with eager longing the kingdom of the just believers and the heavenly city with all its joys.

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If someone well educated in humane learning, who has already decided to become a Christian, comes to you to be catechized,

⁹ Matt. 22, 40.

it is most likely that he has already acquired a considerable knowledge of our Scriptures and other writings, and thus equipped comes now only to be made a partaker in the sacraments. With such as these we must be brief, and not dwell with tiresome insistence on what they know already, but touch lightly upon it, saying, for instance, that we believe they are already familiar with this or that point. In this way we pass rapidly in review all that has to be impressed on the minds of the ignorant and unlearned, so that the educated man who knows it already does not have to listen to it as though from a teacher; and if there are any points of which he is ignorant, he can learn them while we are going over them, assuming he is familiar with them. It will certainly be useful also to ask him why he desires to be a Christian; if you see he has reached that decision by books, either the Scriptures or other good writings, you can say something about these, recommending them in accordance with their merits.

There are also some who come from the ordinary schools of grammar and rhetoric, whom you would neither class as illiterate nor as learned men whose minds have been trained by the investigation of serious questions. These seem to surpass all others in the art of speaking, and when they come to be Christians we must convey to them more fully than to the illiterate an earnest warning to clothe themselves in Christian humility, and learn not to despise those who avoid faults of character more carefully than faults of diction; they must not presume to compare to purity of heart the trained language they formerly displayed. Most of all, they should be taught to listen to Holy Scripture, so that sound eloquence may not seem mean to them simply because it is not pretentious, and that they may not imagine that the words and deeds of men, rolled up and concealed in the Scriptures in fleshly coverings, should be understood materially and literally, rather than be unfolded and have their inner meaning revealed. These men must learn that the meaning should be considered superior to the words, just as the soul is preferred to the body. Hence too they should prefer to hear true rather than elegant sermons, just as they should prefer wise to handsome friends.

Let them realize too that no voice reaches the ears of God except the affection of the heart. Thus they should not smile with contempt if they hear some priests of the Church fall into barbarisms or solecisms in their prayers, or others who do not

understand what they are saying or badly phrase their words. Not that such faults should not be corrected, so that the people may say 'Amen' to what they plainly understand; but none the less they should be patiently endured by those who have learnt that true prayer is good speaking in the church just as style is in the law courts. And while the language of the law courts can sometimes be called good speech, it can never be called holy speech.

With regard to the sacrament they are about to receive, it is enough for the more intelligent to be told what the rite means, but for those who are less gifted we should use more words and illustrations, lest they come to despise what they see.

★ ★ ★

If it is distasteful for us to repeat over and over again what is familiar to us and suitable for children, let us adapt ourselves to our hearers with a brother's, a father's or even a mother's love; when once we are linked to them with such bonds of affection, these things will seem new even to us. For the power of sympathy is so great that when people are affected by us as we speak and we by them as they learn, we each dwell in the other. Thus they speak in us, as it were, what they hear, while we learn in them what we teach. Is it not a common occurrence, that when we show to our friends the beauties of town or country which we often pass without pleasure because they are familiar, our own delight is renewed by theirs at the novelty of the scene? And the closer our friendship is, the more easily does this happen; for in proportion as we dwell in them through the bond of love, so does what is old become renewed.

If we have made some progress in the contemplative life, we are not content for our friends to be delighted and amazed merely at the work of men's hands; we wish to raise them to consider the skill and design of the artist, and thence have them soar higher to the admiration and love of God, who created all things and is the life-giving end of all true love. How much more then should we rejoice when men come to study God himself, for the sake of whom everything which should be learned is to be learnt, and how much more should we be renewed by their newness, so that if our preaching becomes dull by repetition, it may grow interesting because of our hearers for whom it is all fresh.

To help us attain to joy we should think and reflect that our

brother is passing over from the death of error into the life of faith. And if we walk through streets familiar to us with kindly cheerfulness when we point out his way to one who had lost it, how much more promptly and joyfully should we go over matters of life-giving doctrine even when they are familiar to us, when we are escorting through the paths of peace a soul who deserves our pity and is weary of the wanderings of this world, at the command of him who has given that peace to us?

If our mind is troubled by some scandal and so cannot produce a calm and agreeable discourse, our love should be so great for those for whom Christ died, who willed to redeem them from the death of this world's errors by his own blood, that the very fact of our learning that someone is at hand who desires to be a Christian should lighten and dispel our grief, even as joy over winnings alleviates grief over losses. So let him who comes as a candidate remove our sorrow at another's defection through our hope that he will make progress in the faith.

But if our sadness is caused by some error or sin of our own, we should be glad that an opportunity for a work of great mercy is given to us, as though a well were pointed out to us from which to put out a fire which had broken out. When by such thoughts the darkness of disgust has been repelled, our mind is prepared for catechizing, and our words proceed readily and cheerfully from the rich abundance of love and are imbibed with deep enjoyment. It is not so much I who say this to you as love itself, which is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.¹⁰



St Augustine's longer specimen of a catechetical instruction cannot be included here; what follows is his shorter version.

The happiness promised to the saints in the world to come is indeed great and true. But all visible things pass away; the pride of this life, the lust of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes shall perish, drawing their lovers with them to destruction. God in his mercy, desiring to deliver men from this destruction of eternal punishment, if only they will not be their own enemies and resist their Creator's mercy, sent his only-begotten Son, his Word, equal to himself, by whom he created all things. But he, though remaining God and neither departing from the Father

¹⁰ Rom. 5, 5.

nor being changed in any way, yet took upon himself a human nature and came unto men, appearing in mortal flesh, so that, as death came into the human race by one man, Adam, who was created first, consenting to his wife who had been led astray by the devil, and thus both transgressed God's commands; so also through one man who is also God, Jesus Christ the Son of God, all who believe in him might enter eternal life, after their past sins had been by him utterly blotted out.

Everything which you now see happening in the Church of God and in Christ's name throughout the world was already foretold long ago: what we read agrees with what we see, and our faith grows thereby. Once there was a flood over the whole earth that sinners might be destroyed, but those who escaped in the ark were a figure of the Church to come, which now floats on the waves of the world and is saved from sinking by the wood of Christ's cross. To one single man, Abraham, God's faithful servant, it was foretold that from him would spring a people who would worship the one true God among the other nations who worshipped idols; everything foretold to this people came about in accordance with the prophecies. In this people too it was prophesied that Christ would come, king of all saints and true God, from the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, so that all who reproduced Abraham's faith should be sons of his. And so it came to pass: Christ was born of the Virgin Mary who belonged to that race. In accordance with the prophecies he rose again, ascended into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples. It was foretold not only by the prophets but also by the Lord Jesus Christ that his Church would be found throughout the world, sown by the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints; and foretold at a time when his name was unknown to the nations, or, if known, it was mocked. Nevertheless, by the power of his miracles, accomplished in his own person or through his servants, which are now noised abroad and believed, we see already that what was predicted is fulfilled and that the very kings of the earth who formerly persecuted the Christians, are now subject to the name of Christ. It was also foretold that schisms and heresies would come forth out of the Church and seek their own glory, not Christ's, wherever they could, yet claiming his name: this too has been fulfilled.

Shall not then the remaining prophecies be fulfilled? It is clear

that even as the former events foretold came to pass, so also shall the others, whatever tribulations still remain for the just: and especially the day of Judgment which shall separate the wicked from the just in the resurrection of the dead and set apart for the fire which is their due not only those outside the Church, but also the chaff of the Church herself, which she must bear with the utmost patience until the final winnowing. But those who laugh the resurrection to scorn because they think that as this flesh rots it cannot rise again, are destined to rise therein to punishment; and God shall show them that he who could make those bodies before they actually existed, can in a moment restore them as they were. But all the faithful who are to reign with Christ shall rise again in the same body in such a way that they will enjoy the incorruption of the angels; thus they will be equal to them, as the Lord promised, and will praise him unceasingly to their hearts' content, living always by him and in him with joy and happiness which surpass all human words and thoughts.

Since you believe this, be on your guard against temptations, because the devil seeks some to be lost with him. Take care that the enemy does not lead you astray either through those who are outside the Church, whether pagans, Jews or heretics, but also through your imitating the example of those in the Catholic Church whom you see leading evil lives of self-indulgence in gluttony and impurity, or those given to vain and unlawful curiosity, charms, divinations and shows of the devil. Beware also those who live in the pomp and vanity of pride and covetousness and practise what the Decalogue condemns and punishes; rather associate with the good, whom you will easily find, if you too are such yourself; so that together with them you may worship and love God for his own sake. He himself shall be our whole reward and we shall enjoy his goodness and beauty in the next life. But he is to be loved not as something seen by the eyes, but as wisdom is loved, and truth and holiness and charity and similar virtues; not however as these are found in men, but as they are in the very source of incorruptible and unchangeable wisdom.

Therefore associate with all who love these virtues, so that through Christ who became man in order to be the mediator between God and men you may be reconciled to God. But do not think that the wicked shall enter the kingdom of heaven

even though they enter the doors of the churches, because if they do not amend they will be separated at the appointed time. Imitate the good, bear with the evil, love all men; for you do not know what the man who is evil today will be tomorrow. Do not love their unrighteousness, but love them in order that they may attain to righteousness: for not only is the love of God enjoined upon us, but also the love of our neighbour; on these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets. And no one fulfils this law except him who receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is truly equal to the Father and the Son. The Trinity itself is God, in whom we must place our hope, and not in any man whatever. For he by whom we are justified is quite distinct from those with whom we are justified.

The devil tempts us not only through inordinate desires but also through fear of insults and sufferings and of death itself. Now if a man suffers anything for the name of Christ and the hope of eternal life and steadfastly endures it, a greater reward will be given him; but if he yields to the devil, he will be condemned with him. Works of mercy however and godly humility obtain from the Lord that he does not allow his servants to be tempted more than they are able to endure.



COMMENT

Alone but never lonely

MUCH has recently been written in the popular press about that vast army of women who live on their own. Following the publication of such articles, a number of these people hotly denied that they are lonely but many others admitted that their loneliness is so great that it is the overwhelming aspect of their lives. Let us hope that no Catholic women were amongst those who made this sad admission: there is certainly no need for them to do so.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, to be lonely is to be 'solitary, isolated, unfrequented, companionless'. What an

impossible situation for the practising Catholic! Frequent reception of Holy Communion and a thoughtful pondering over the doctrine of the Indwelling must immediately prevent such abysmal loneliness. The woman who lives alone has perhaps more chance than many others to think frequently how the whole of her life is a partnership with Christ.

Then how can anyone be lonely who has our Lady as Mother and the Saints as friends? And how sad it is that that constant companion, our Guardian Angel, is so often forgotten. The lady who was suddenly heard to exclaim, 'Oh, I'm so sorry. Did I squash your wings?' may not have been theologically correct but she was certainly unlikely to feel lonely!

If we have no other person for whom to perform our household duties, we can always do them for the Holy Family. 'All for Jesus' should be a vital motive in our lives and not looked upon as a rather hackneyed and meaningless phrase.

Maybe you know the story of the stranger who once called entirely unexpectedly on an elderly lady. To the visitor's astonishment she was warmly greeted with the words: 'I'm so glad you've managed to come. I've been expecting you for some time.' In her caller the old lady saw Christ himself, her Lord for whom she kept everything in readiness, and in her pleasure she had spoken her thoughts aloud.

It is of course essential for us all to attain to perpetual awareness of Christ in our neighbour but the woman-on-her-own who neglects this aspect of the Faith is cutting herself adrift from one of her main sources of companionship.

We must learn to recognize God in the fish-queue as easily as we perceive his presence in church. Even those people who push ahead of us should be treated with respect. Our Lord submits himself humbly to the dictates of his creatures and it may be that in that person he is being carried where he would not. Anyway, the important thing is to acknowledge him in everyone else.

Yet on the natural plane we are gregarious creatures and a longing for human contact is understandable. The lone female instinctively craves a link with the rest of her fellows. Well, here in the fish-queue she has her chance. A cheerful comment to the elderly person in front, a helping hand to the one with an awkwardly packed basket . . . such opportunities are manifold.

If at first we lack courage to speak to people we do not know,

there is surely nothing to stop us talking to our Lord about them instead. Be quick to notice little things. Perhaps one person is obviously tired, another may be unwell, a third anxious—mention each one briefly but sincerely to Jesus. Quite incidentally, you'll be surprised to find how quickly the time passes before it's your turn to be served!

Such opportunity of self-forgetfulness through absorption in others comes to us in many particular places. Next time you're in the waiting-room of the doctor's surgery, take a look round at your fellow patients. Strain and worry will show on many a face. Unite yourself and each person's woes to the Passion of our Lord—and don't omit the obvious hypochondriac, who may well need help more desperately than anyone else in the room.

Odd snatches of conversation in the waiting-room reveal much to the sympathetic listener. A kind word in reply may often do more good than a bottleful of tonic. Again, cafés, buses and trains are all fruitful sources from which we may come to a closer understanding of our fellow-men. Form the habit of identifying yourself with the problems of others—and don't forget the waitresses' feet!

'That's all very well', I can hear some lone female objecting, 'but I'm not often able to get out. I don't even come into contact with the people you've been mentioning.'

The permanent invalid may receive much help from the organized Apostolate of the Sick, but admittedly there are many not-so-strong who are also of necessity frequently confined indoors. There must be few of these, however, who do not possess a wireless and this can be used not only for entertainment but as a real link to the needs of the world.

Newspapers too, both Catholic and secular, provide endless supplies of identifying ourselves with others by means of prayer. The Bishop fighting for his schools, those new missionaries setting sail, the family whose home was burnt to the ground, that person who tried to commit suicide—all concern you.

Then what about that knitting? If you don't have a family to knit for, why not embark on a blanket for refugees? (The Oxford Famine Relief Committee supply wool where required.) Ejaculatory and spontaneous prayers for the suffering recipient can readily be enmeshed with the stitches. And don't forget their persecutors. There is a scheme, started in America, whereby every

Catholic is asked to pray particularly for the conversion and salvation of one Communist soul.

Quite possibly you don't sleep very well. Never mind. Seize the opportunity to help the world along. Try saying an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for everyone you know, or have read about or heard about that day.

If after a while this becomes too much of an effort, just remember before God the various groups of people who are working through the night—those in hospitals, on the sea, in the bakeries and so on. And say the De Profundis for those who have died since darkness fell.

These are only some ideas for the on-her-own woman. Plenty more will occur to each individual concerned once the matter is seriously considered. But above everything else, let us try to remember that 'alone' means 'all one'. Christ and his Mystical Body the Church, in heaven, in purgatory and on earth, are one—all one, with each one of us, so none can ever be lonely.

MARY MARTIN



EXTRACTS

EVANGELISER July-August 1958, the Belgian Review concerned with the spirit and techniques of the apostolate (La Pensée Catholique, Bruxelles 4, 40 Avenue de la Renaissance) has an interesting article *Pour une meilleure formation religieuse des enfants* which has a direct bearing on the theme of the present number of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. We give here some excerpts in translation that are relevant not only to the teaching of religion to children, but also to the preaching of it to adults.

Mgr Charrue, Bishop of Namur, is quoted in this article as saying:

In a de-christianized world the old methods of teaching are no longer effective. We are not dealing with children brought up in surroundings which are genuinely Christian. . . . Formerly, when the family and the village were Christian, learning by heart with a minimum of understanding could be sufficient to secure, from children in whose homes religious obligations were recognized, the unquestioning acceptance of revealed truths, confession of what must be sins because the Catechism says so, and a more or less genuine and regular reception of the sacraments.

For those who are baptized, but for whom the authority of the Church means nothing, this is not enough. Religious teaching in theological language appeals only to memory and intelligence and not at all to the feelings, the imagination and the hearts of children. It is powerless to secure their attention and adherence and so to guide their lives, in a world that is constantly drawing them in the opposite direction.

Mgr Himmer, Bishop of Tournai, writes:

We must never confine the aims of our catechesis to the memorization of an array of abstract formulas. On the contrary, it must draw out the faith of the child in such a way as to put it in real contact with the Christian mystery. After first Communion and Confirmation he will, from then on, have to live in a paganized world largely beyond the reach of school and parish.

What is needed is not so much the memorizing and explanation of abstract formulas as the formation of a living faith which will arouse a genuine love of God and a real horror of sin. It is less a matter of giving the child a code of obligations having little connection with Christ than of putting him into personal touch with Christ as a master, who makes big demands but is at the same time a Saviour, near him and very powerful to help.

In dealing with the revision of the content of our teaching Père Roguet gives the following principles which apply equally to the teaching of children and preaching to adults:

The *Credo* by which we live is not arranged like a big department store. On the ground floor food-stuffs of every kind in orderly array: pastries, meat, vegetables, preserves and so on; on the first floor ironmongery and household requirements; on the second, clothing and sports equipment. Everything set out in order, divisions and sub-divisions neatly labelled.

No, the Faith is much more like a tree: a solid trunk full of sap which supports and gives life to the whole tree: from it grow out the main branches, from these smaller ones, and from them the living sap flows into leaves and fruit.

'I preach Christ only', said St Paul, 'and him crucified.' He is the way, the truth and the life. We must give him the first place in our preaching whether to believers, to unbelievers or to those who half believe. He must be grasped at the outset, the rest will come by growth.

In dealing with teaching methods Mgr Garrone's book *L'Eglise notre Mère* is quoted:

The Church has three languages: the language of theology, biblical language and liturgical language.

The language of the Catechism is exclusively theological: it is made up of definitions, formulas, lists, explanations, arguments and scriptural and philosophical proofs. . . .

We must no longer separate what is learned in 'Catechism' from the living truth to be found in the Bible stories.

The Bible is not meant to be read systematically from cover to cover. The Church never treats it in this way when it presents the Word of God to us in the Liturgy. St Paul says that all these things happened in 'figure' for our enlightenment. Every truth, every actual need has its 'figure' or foreshadowing here or there in the history of the people of God. To explore the Bible in this way with children (and adults), following up the different themes to be met with there, is to educate them to tackle the sacred books in a way that is religious and liturgical. It is also the way to enable them to realize how constant is the connection between the Old and New Testaments and the convergence of both in Christ.

As to the Liturgy, which is the Church's catechesis, it holds, as a rule, a negligible place in our teaching. The future solution of our problem seems to be here. Everywhere in the Church, in connection with the biblical and liturgical revival there is emerging a catechetical revival in which the Liturgy will take the foremost place. It will not then be Doctrine + Bible + Liturgy, but a liturgical way, vital because shared by the praying community, of approaching the Bible and drawing from it in thought and still more in prayer doctrine which will become the actual expression of our response, within the Church, to the appeal of the Bible's words and actions.

A work of this kind, which centres the teaching of religion upon the great Christian truths: Creation, Revelation, Incarnation, Redemption, Church and Sacraments, vitally expressed in the celebration of the Liturgy, will perhaps prove to be the first stage of a religious revival in our time. For biblical teaching expressed in Liturgy is nothing less than the teaching of the Church.



REVIEWS

THE SCROLLS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT. Edited by Krister Stendahl.
(S.C.M. Press; 35s.)

The English publishers of this book claim for it that 'these fourteen authoritative papers by a distinguished international team of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish scholars provide a well-grounded interim verdict on the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the main departments of

New Testament studies'. This seems to me a very just description. It is a compilation of articles drawn from various learned periodicals, and here translated (where necessary), revised, expanded, and brought up to date by their original authors. Its contents may be classified according to the 'main departments of New Testament studies' to which the publishers refer.

Messianism. Dr K. Stendahl compares the Messianic ideas of Qumrân with those of the New Testament and concludes that the difference is a difference in degree of anticipation'. Christians and Covenanters alike believed that their respective leaders were to return as Messias at the end of the world. (Dr Stendahl is on rather questionable ground here with regard to the Teacher of Righteousness.) But the Christians, unlike the Covenanters, believed also that their leader was already risen and enthroned in heaven as Messias in *anticipation* of that final consummation. In fact Dr Stendahl considerably underestimates the new and unexpected modifications which the Messianic ideal underwent in the teaching of Christ, but this is to some extent corrected in a subsequent essay by Dr Cullmann. In a study entitled 'The Two Messiahs' Dr K. G. Kuhn decides that 'The New Testament presupposes the messianic expectation of the average Jew, not the special two-Messiah concept of the Essenes'.

St Paul. Taking as his starting point the ideas of sin and flesh in St Paul and in the Essene writings, Dr Kuhn investigates the further idea, common to both literatures, of the eschatological war, and shows how this in turn deepens our understanding of the New Testament concept of temptation. Dr W. D. Davies arrives at the more cautious conclusion that the antithesis of flesh and spirit in St Paul 'is more in the main stream of the Old Testament and Rabbinic Judaism than in that of the sect'.

The Synoptic Gospels. Dr K. Schubert finds ideas and phrases in the Sermon on the Mount which are redolent of Essenism. He argues forcibly that our Lord may well have intended to define his position here towards the Essene sect and its doctrines, which he appears sometimes to accept, sometimes radically to oppose, and often to modify. Fr E. Vogt shows how Essene terminology confirms us in reading 'Peace among men of God's good pleasure' in the difficult verse of Luke 2, 14.

The Johannine Writings. Father R. E. Brown finds five main points of contact between the Qumrân Scrolls and St John's Gospel and Epistles, and shows that 'the basic difference between the two theologies

'Christ' who leads the 'Sons of Light' precisely as the Divine and uncreated Word.

Communal Organization and Way of Life. Dr S. Johnson and Dr B.

Reicke compare the constitution and organization of the Essene community with that of the early Church as we find it in Acts. One is also particularly grateful to find Dr Kuhn's famous comparison between the Qumrân ritual meal and the Christian Last Supper included in this collection.

Connecting Links Between Qumrân and the Early Church. Dr W. H. Brownlee is especially helpful on John the Baptist here, and Dr Cullmann lucidly explains his well-known suggestion that the Hellenists whom we meet in Acts provide a further link with the Essene Sect.

Peripheral Questions. Fr J. A. Fitzmyer provides a clear and valuable comparison between the Covenanters and the heretical Christian sect of the Ebionites, and finally Dr N. N. Glatzer shows that the teaching of Rabbi Hillel may have been consciously formulated as a corrective to the extreme exclusivism of the Essenes.

Most of these articles are addressed to the initiated. They are intended to be read critically, and presuppose a certain familiarity with the subject. Some over-lapping in subject-matter, and some omissions (notably Hebrews and Apocalypse) are perhaps inevitable. The inconvenient arrangement of the notes at the back of the book tends to cause irritation and waste of time. But these are minor defects. Dr Stendahl has chosen most wisely. He has done New Testament scholars an immense service in assembling here some of the soundest and most fruitful suggestions which have been made during the ten years since the Scrolls were first discovered.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS OF ST THOMAS AQUINAS. By David Knowles. (Aquinus Paper No. 30. Blackfriars; 1s. 6d.)

Leaving aside the Thomists of the old school who go to their master's works as though to a universal provider of chapter and verse to meet any occasion, and noticing the newer schools of literary criticism which narrow them to the circumstances of their composition, this lecture by a distinguished historian, addressing himself to their historical significance, asks what they owed to the past and what, if anything, was original in them. His personal testimony may be cited. 'The more and the longer the history of the thirteenth century is studied, the more does the thought of St Thomas, even considered merely as a historical phenomenon, appear as something more than just one tree, even the biggest, in a row. Others, indeed, cannot be despised; they may even touch upon points that he omits and supplement or even correct him. But if one is looking for a complete system of thought in the Middle Ages, it is St Thomas or nothing.'

Only a minority in academic circles would have agreed in the two centuries that followed his death. We must look elsewhere for the acknowledgment of his special magistral greatness, to the mystics of the Rhineland. 'Though it is still a matter of dispute whether Eckhart was a Neoplatonist with a smattering of Thomism or a Thomist with a penchant for Neoplatonism, there is no doubt that so far as Eckhart dealt with technical theology he used the Thomist idiom. It probably says much for his radical orthodoxy that his disciples are unimpeachably orthodox (and Thomist)—John Tauler above all. The result of this was that the great mystical school of the Rhineland wrote and thought in the Thomist language and built up an entirely Thomist mystical theology. This was exported wherever German spirituality went. It is seen very clearly in the English *Cloud of Unknowing* and in Walter Hilton, who follows *The Cloud*, and it is seen still more clearly in the Spanish Carmelites, above all in St John of the Cross. Although by his time the Thomist revival in Spain was well under way, it was probably not so much from Salamanca as from Tauler, directly or indirectly, that St John derived the Thomist framework of his mystical theology—by no means the least important part of the Thomist legacy to modern times.'

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

A GUIDE TO THE CITY OF GOD. By M. Versfeld. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Mr Versfeld is a lecturer in moral philosophy. Neither he nor his publishers tell us what university he teaches in, but wherever it is, the students of philosophy at that university are warmly to be envied. He has been lecturing to them for some years on the *De Civitate Dei*, and this excellent little book of a mere 138 pages now gives a wider public the benefit of his reflections on this subject.

St Augustine had a great and energetic mind, which he expressed with an inexhaustible eloquence in enormous volumes. The *City of God* must be at least twenty times the size of this modest guide to it. But the guide is wholly adequate to the vast rambling edifice, and succeeds in putting the reader in living contact with the mind of the architect. A man must be both very bold and very self-effacing to write or lecture successfully on the thought of St Augustine; if we try and tidy up his thought for him, classify his ideas into topics, his political theory, his philosophy of history, his doctrine of grace and predestination, his Platonism, his this, that and the other, then his thought immediately goes limp and lifeless in our hands, like water-lilies out of the pond. The vital element in which all his thought expands and lives is his quest for God, his faith seeking understanding. It is this context that Mr Versfeld is careful to preserve for us.

He has tried to catch, he says—and he has certainly succeeded—‘something of the mind of Augustine, and it was the mind of a bishop and a theologian’. How often this obvious truism is overlooked! The philosophic apparatus of Augustine’s mind was wholly at the service of his faith. There was no such thing for him as a philosophic discipline independent of theology—or of theology independent of philosophy. Christianity is the one true philosophy, Platonism, the Academy, Stoicism and all the other schools are false theologies, against which the *City of God* is a work of sustained polemic.

With a most disarming candour Mr Versfeld admits that he cannot appropriate that side of Augustine’s mind which interprets history by allegorizing Scripture, and he leaves the matter ‘without prejudice to some more sympathetic or more intelligent commentator’. Here he is being just neither to himself nor to Augustine. Not to himself, because his failure is due to want of information, not to a lack of either sympathy or intelligence, of which his whole book is redolent. Unfair to Augustine, because his exegesis in the *City of God* must be taken in conjunction with all his exegesis in his other works; above all it must be taken in the context of the whole exegetical tradition of his time. He did not learn to allegorize from Platonism, but from the Church, from the Fathers who went before him, right back to Irenaeus and Justin, and we may safely say from the Bible itself. Perhaps Mr Versfeld would appreciate Augustine’s very traditional allegorizing more sympathetically if he were to read some of the anti-allegorical exegesis of, say, Augustine’s contemporary Theodore of Mopsuestia. There is nothing like a diet of ship’s biscuit and salt pork to make one appreciate good food.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SPANISH MYSTICS. Edited and translated by K. Pond. Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 16s.)

This book of extracts from the Spanish spiritual writers of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries serves a useful purpose in introducing the general reader to the background from which the genius of St Teresa and St John of the Cross arose. It will certainly come as a surprise to many to find how numerous and how varied were the writers on spirituality during these three centuries. Their teaching follows the main line of Patristic and mediaeval tradition in the interpretation of the Scriptures psychologically, and in ascetical theology. As is well known, Laredo and Osuna derived some of their mystical teaching on prayer from Richard of St Victor, and St Teresa was deeply indebted to them for her doctrine on the prayer of Quiet. Among the other writers quoted we find some passages of fine prose

in Antonio de Guevara and the translator has brought out well that elegance of style which we find in the English writers of the period, such as More, Rastall and William Perin. Indeed, some of the works of Luis de Granada and others were translated and much appreciated in the seventeenth century in England.

The spirit of the Spanish spiritual writers is that of true realism, namely that attitude towards God and man which takes account of all God's creation; which combines a deep love of nature with the study of the mind and heart of man; which does not neglect the significance of the small details of life and yet can rise to the abstract heights of speculation and the warmth of contemplative devotion. The simplicity of St Teresa's common-sense counsels and the exaltation of her contemplative passages, the lyricism of St John and his logical methodology of ascetism can be found, albeit in a lesser degree and with far less felicity of expression, in many of these writers. Occasionally we find examples of an earlier mentality in the allegorical and symbolical commentary on Scriptural phrases, especially those used liturgically, such as Laredo's passages on the Fashionings of the City of God. Towards the end of the period the influence of St Ignatius' Exercises is very marked and one becomes aware of a formality of thought and expression which affected all European spirituality. The editor's notes on the life and works of each author provide a good and useful bibliography. It is a pity that the publishers chose the word *Mystics* in the title, for the majority of the writers are exponents of ascetism, spiritual devotion and the approaches to contemplation, but not mystics in the strict sense of the word.

C.K.

LE SACERDOCE DANS LE MYSTÈRE DU CHRIST. Par Joseph Lécuyer.
(Les Editions du Cerf.)

Le Sacerdoce dans Le Mystère du Christ is a prolonged commentary on the Scriptural texts, notably the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerned with the priesthood of our Lord. Père Lécuyer ranges far and wide and supports his thesis with numerous Patristic references. He shows how our Lord's priesthood is bound up with the whole of his redemptive work from the Incarnation to the Resurrection. Through the doctrine of the Mystical Body the priesthood of the faithful is seen as a continuation of our Lord's, whilst a detailed examination of the priesthood of the Apostles and the sacrament of Order clarifies the distinction between the priesthood of the laity and the priesthood of those who have been ordained.

H.N.

SHORT NOTICES

THE Newman Press, Maryland, U.S.A., continues to bring out their series of text-books on apologetical subjects. One will be reviewed in more detail in a subsequent number. Meanwhile here is one on *The Papacy* by P. Brezzi, and an introduction to theology, called *Sacred Doctrine*, by E. G. Kaiser. A rather different type of apologetics is the same publisher's paper-back, *Freud and Religion*, by G. Zilboorg.

Three small books of spiritual reading have recently been published by Clonmore and Reynolds, of Dublin, all translations. *Holiness of the Priesthood*, by J. Staudinger, s.j. (30s.), *Happiness through Prayer*, by K. Rahner, s.j. (9s. 6d.), which is as much superior to the former as it is less expensive; and *Living in God*, by R. de Langeac (9s. 6d.).

Letters from the Saints, edited by C. Williamson (Rockliff 21s.), provides selections from the correspondence of saints from St Thomas Aquinas to Bl. Southwell. There are brief sketches of the writers added. No better introduction to the saints than their own unpremeditated occasional writings could be found. Among the saints whose letters are included is St Philip Neri, and Fr Louis Bouyer provides us with a very short sketch of his life in *The Roman Socrates*, now translated and published by Chapman (8s. 6d.).

The same publisher is to be congratulated on the *Doctrine and Life* series of half-crown paper-backs which they have started to bring out. They really have some connection with life, unlike so many otherwise worthy spiritual books. Outstanding among the first four to be produced is *The Christian Meaning of Hope* by R. Hasseveldt. The others are *Prayer and the Present Moment*, by M. Day; *Our Lady in Human Life*, by P. Doncoeur; *The Lord is Near*, by Mgr Richaud.

In Remembrance of Me, by Mgr Martimort, translated by Dom Aldhelm Dean (Challoner, 11s. 6d.), is a book of instruction rather than meditations on the meaning and structure of the Church's sacraments and ceremonies, valuable both for those who desire to increase their now knowledge of the faith and for those who are engaged in giving more than merely elementary instruction to others.

Blackfriars have just brought out another edition of *Dominican Life* by P. Joret, o.p., which was first published in this country in 1937 and has long been out of print.

Dr Charles Davis, of St Edmunds, has followed up his leaflet on *Baptism* with a second with the title *Return to the Church*. This is printed in red and black, illustrated. It contains the form of reconciliation of a convert with explanations and an instructive section at the end on the Christian Life—most effective and valuable—one shilling each. Every parish priest should order in a stock and use them. Write direct to Dr C. Davis, St Edmund's College, Ware, Herts.